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REMARKS

The foregoing amendment to Claims 45, 62 and 102 is supported on page 14 (Table 1) and page 15 of the specification. As previously explained, the flowable absorbent material remains able to flow in the absorbent article after absorbing at least about 10.5 grams water per gram flowable absorbent material. The present amendment indicates that the flowable absorbent material is nonswellable under these conditions. The ability of the flowable absorbent material to flow after absorbing this much water, arises from the fact that the absorbent material is capable of absorbing at least about 10.5 grams of water per gram of flowable absorbent material without expanding. This is in contrast to prior art absorbent materials (e.g. polyacrylates) which expand and gel after only slight water absorption, whereby the ability to flow in an absorbent article is denied.

As shown in Table 1 on page 14 of the specification, three inventive absorbent materials containing polymethylene urea with or without minor percentages of polyacrylate were able to absorb at least 15 times their weight in water under conditions where no volume expansion was possible. A prior art absorbent material composed entirely of polyacrylate was able to absorb only 1.6 times its weight in water under the same conditions (see p. 15, lines 1-6). Thus, the absorbent material useful in the invention (unlike conventional absorbent materials) both a) retains its

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ability to flow and b) is nonswellable, after absorbing at least about 10.5 times its weight in water.

In the Request For Reconsideration filed 08 October 2002, Applicants responded to all of the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and/or §103(a). The rejection of Claims 45-49, 57-59, 62, 68-69, 71, 73-75, 82-86, 94-96, 102-105 and 107-111 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Kellenberger (EP 0,339,461) is respectfully traversed for the following additional reason. Kellenberger does not disclose an absorbent article including a flowable nonswellable absorbent material which is capable of absorbing at least about 10.5 times its weight of water without swelling.

The rejection of Claims 60, 61, 76, 78 and 79 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Kellenberger in view of LeMahieu et al. (U.S. Patent 5,904,672) is further traversed. Then claims depend from Claims 45 and 62, and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, LeMahieu et al. does not disclose a flowable nonswellable absorbent material which is capable of absorbing at least about 10.5 times its weight of water without swelling.

The rejection of Claims 63 and 64 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Kellenberger in view of Luceri (U.S. Patent 5,807,365) is further traversed. These claims depend from Claim 62, and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, Luceri does not disclose a flowable nonswellable absorbent material

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which is capable of absorbing at least about 10.5 times its weight of water without swelling.

The rejection of Claims 65, 66, 68, 70 and 72 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Kellenberger in view of Plischke et al. (U.S. Patent 5,977,014) is further traversed. These claims depend from Claim 62, and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, Plischke et al. does not disclose a flowable nonswellable absorbent material which is capable of absorbing at least about 10.5 times its weight of water without swelling.

The rejection of Claims 80 and 81 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Kellenberger in view of Jones, Sr. (U.S. Patent 3,794,034) is further traversed. These claims depend from Claim 62, and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, Jones, Sr. does not disclose a flowable nonswellable absorbent material which is capable of absorbing at least about 10.5 times its weight of water without swelling.

The rejection of Claims 97-101 and 106 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Kellenberger in view of Reising et al. (U.S. Patent 4,988,344) is further traversed. These claims depend from Claims 62 and 102, and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, Reising et al. does not disclose a flowable nonswellable absorbent material which is capable of absorbing at least about 10.5 times its weight of water without swelling.

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Applicants believe that the claims, as now presented, are in condition for allowance. Again, Applicants thank the Examiner for the telephone interview.

Respectfully submitted,



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APPENDIX SHOWING MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

45. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

a liquid-permeable layer;

a substantially liquid-impermeable layer; and

an absorbent body between the liquid-permeable layer and the substantially liquid-impermeable layer;

the absorbent body comprising a flowable absorbent material which is nonswellable and remains able to flow after absorbing at least about 10.5 grams water per gram flowable absorbent material.

62. (Twice Amended) The absorbent article, comprising:

a substantially liquid-impermeable layer;

an absorbent body connected to the substantially liquid-impermeable layer in a central region of the substantially liquid-impermeable layer; and

a liquid permeable layer over a side of the absorbent body opposite the substantially liquid-impermeable layer;

the absorbent body comprising a flowable absorbent material which is nonswellable and remains able to flow after absorbing at least about 10.5 grams water per gram flowable absorbent material.

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102. (Twice Amended) A hygiene article, comprising:
a liquid-permeable layer;
a substantially liquid-impermeable layer; and
an absorbent body between the liquid-permeable layer and the
substantially liquid-impermeable layer;
the absorbent body comprising a flowable absorbent material which is
nonswellable and remains able to flow after absorbing at least about 10.5 grams water
per gram flowable absorbent material.